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COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE LATIN AMERICAN ECONOMIC SYSTEM

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report was prepared in compliance with General Assembly resolution 48/22, of 22 November 1993, concerning cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System (SELA), which was adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session.

2. In that resolution, the General Assembly:

> "1. Takes note with satisfaction of the report of the Secretary-General;
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> "2. Urges the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to continue broadening and deepening its coordination and mutual support activities with the Latin American Economic System;
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> "3. Urges the United Nations Development Programme to strengthen and expand its support to the programmes that the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American Economic System is carrying out, aimed at complementing the technical assistance activities conducted by the Latin American Economic System;
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> "4. Urges the specialized agencies and other organizations and programmes of the United Nations system to continue and intensify their support for, and cooperation in the activities of, the Latin American Economic System;

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* A/49/150.

"5. Requests both the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Permanent Secretary of the Latin American Economic System to assess, at the appropriate time, the implementation of the Agreement between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session;

"6. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution."

3. For the preparation of the present report, the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) wrote to the following organizations of the United Nations system requesting an update of their activities with the Latin American Economic System (SELA), to be included in the Secretary-General's report: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), International Maritime Organization (IMO), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), World Meteorological Organization (WMO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Universal Postal Union (UPU), World Bank, World Health Organization (WHO), World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), United Nations University (UNU), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) and United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat). Fourteen of these organizations sent updated information on their cooperation with SELA. Seven noted that they did not currently carry out any activities with SELA, although some of them expressed a desire to do so in the future. The following summary was based on all of this information.

II. COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE LATIN AMERICAN ECONOMIC SYSTEM

4. As noted in the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session (A/48/409), since the establishment in October 1975 of SELA, considerable cooperation has taken place between United Nations organizations, agencies and programmes, especially the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and SELA.

5. As the above-mentioned report shows, this cooperation has intensified over the years and has become more diversified in terms of both the areas of cooperation and the organizations concerned.

6. Cooperation between ECLAC and SELA has consisted, inter alia, of the participation of representatives of ECLAC and SELA in different meetings of the two institutions, and in the preparation by ECLAC of specialized documents in different spheres in support of SELA activities. Listed below are some examples of this cooperation.

7. In the social area, ECLAC has continued to cooperate with SELA in the framework of inter-agency activities concerning integrated social policies in Latin America and the Caribbean. In June 1993 the fourth informal inter-agency meeting on the issue, convened by ECLAC, took place in Cartagena, Colombia. At the meeting, major cooperation agreements concerning preparations for the World Summit for Social Development were adopted.

8. The Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) has maintained close, continued cooperation in its programme activities with SELA, through regular contacts and/or working meetings with the Permanent Secretary and other SELA officials.

9. In the demographic area, ECLAC, through the Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE), has continued to collaborate with SELA; this collaboration has taken the form of participation by the Latin American Documentation System (DOCPAL) in the project "Network of networks", which comprises one of the activities of the project entitled "The status of regional cooperation" (PESICRE), administered by the Permanent Secretariat of SELA.

10. The Latin American Centre for Economic and Social Documentation (CLADES) has organized a series of meetings within the framework of the training programme on information management. These meetings are attended by managers of regional information networks and are intended to improve technical and practical skills related to the field of information management, so as to facilitate the integration of these networks into the global market-place.

11. With respect to international trade, the secretariats of SELA, the Latin American Integration Association (LAIA), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and ECLAC have prepared a document entitled "América Latina y el Caribe ante la actual coyuntura de la Ronda Uruguay", which was presented at the meeting of the Ministers of the Rio Group responsible for multilateral trade negotiations in the context of the Uruguay Round, held in Montevideo on 17 September 1993, which was attended by the Director-General of GATT.

12. In the area of integration, ECLAC has participated in the design and execution of the programme "Courses on integration for Central America", the first of which will be taught in November 1994 in Panama City.

13. As regards industrial policy, ECLAC will participate, through both the preparation of documents and the participation of speakers, in the regional forum on industrial policy to be held on 27 and 28 October in San José, Costa Rica.

14. SELA participated in the second conference of the Inter-American Development Bank/ECLAC project entitled "Support to the process of hemispheric

trade liberalization", which was held in Washington, D.C., on 1 and 2 November 1993. Issues related to this process discussed at the conference included subregional agreements and the Western Hemisphere Free Trade Zone, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the economic costs and benefits of trade liberalization, rules of origin, settlement of disputes, economic integration in the Western Hemisphere, different countries' trade strategies, the conditions needed to maximize the benefits of a free trade zone and trade relations between North and South America. ECLAC also participated in the 20th ordinary meeting of the Latin American Council, held in Mexico City from 30 May to 3 June 1994, and in an international seminar entitled "The development of Latin America and the Caribbean in the twenty-first century: SELA perspectives", held as part of the meeting.

15. FAO has participated in a number of meetings convened by SELA, including the 8th Meeting of Directors of International Technical Cooperation, held in Caracas from 24 to 26 August 1993; the 9th meeting of the Coordination Mechanism for Regional Bodies and Forums Engaged in TCDC activities, held in Caracas, on 27 August 1993; the 19th ordinary meeting of the Latin American Council, held in Caracas, on 28 and 29 October 1993; and the ministerial session at the 20th ordinary meeting of the Latin American Council, held in Mexico City, on 2 and 3 June 1994.

16. FAO had also initiated discussion with the Action Committee for the Economic and Social Development of Central America (CADESCA) concerning cooperation in the implementation of activities relating to food security information systems. Although joint action programmes were foreseen at that time, these programmes were not implemented because CADESCA discontinued its activities soon afterwards.

17. FAO has been providing assistance in food security programming to 14 Latin American countries through a LAIA/FAO regional project, and specific areas for action have been identified in many of these countries. The implementation of food security actions is a field in which cooperation between FAO and SELA could be enhanced in the future.

18. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) provides technical assistance to SELA in the field of shipping to the Latin American countries either directly or through the IMO Regional Coordinator.

19. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO), in cooperation with the Inter-American Development Bank and the Government of Spain, will implement a regional project entitled "Ibero-American climate", which aims at establishing very short-range, short-range and medium-range weather forecasting systems for application in sustainable development programmes in Latin American countries. Other projects being implemented in Latin America include one on a monitoring and research network on greenhouse gases, ozone and UV-B in the five Southern Cone countries and another entitled "Regional cooperative activities in support of global change research" both financed with Global Environment Facility funds. A number of initiatives relating to the protection of the environment are under negotiation with various potential donors.

20. WMO is implementing an important project for a new meteorological telecommunication network based on two-way multipoint telecommunication services via satellite; the project is being financed by the Finnish Agency for International Development (FINNAID) in the case of seven countries in the Central American Isthmus, and by the United States in the case of Caribbean countries. The project will provide an essential infrastructure for the availability of data and information required for meteorological and weather-sensitive activities, including severe weather and hurricane prevention and preparedness.

21. WMO recently conducted a feasibility study in the English-speaking Caribbean countries aimed at designing a plan for the replacement of six severe weather surveillance radars. This proposal will be submitted to potential donors, including the European Union.

22. Within the WMO Voluntary Cooperation Programme, the United States National Weather Service will provide new radiosonde observing equipment for the 10 meteorological stations in the Caribbean. Such a system is of great importance for natural disaster prevention and preparedness, particularly where hurricanes are concerned.

23. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) allocated financial assistance under the regular programme for the project on communication in the service of economic and social integration in Latin America. This is one of a series of activities being developed by the UNESCO Office in Caracas in close association with SELA. Moreover, the following were approved under the UNESCO Participation Programme 1994-1995: implementation of a programme on integrated social policy and a Latin American and Caribbean programme concerning world changes; and provision of support for SELA integrated information services.

24. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has both collaborated with and supported the Permanent Secretariat of SELA in the execution of activities relating to the industrial and technological development of the Latin American and Caribbean countries, particularly activities resulting from the Review and Regional Coordination Meeting prior to the fifth General Conference of UNIDO held at SELA headquarters, as well as from resolutions adopted at the fifth UNIDO Conference. In addition, UNIDO has collaborated with the Permanent Secretariat in the organization of the first meeting of the Regional Forum on Industrial Policy, which will be held in October 1994.

25. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) participated in the fourth meeting of the Latin American and Caribbean Forum on Intellectual Property Policies, held at SELA headquarters from 27 to 29 April 1994. At the request of SELA, WIPO prepared and presented at that meeting the following papers entitled "Recent trends and changes in the protection of industrial property rights at the regional and international levels", and "Latest developments regarding industrial property information systems based on CD-ROM technology".

26. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) did not implement any activities in cooperation with SELA but expressed its interest in expanding possible avenues of cooperation in the future.

27. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has continued to collaborate with the Permanent Secretariat of SELA, particularly through project RLA/92/008, through which it has been involved in the conduct of major studies of the Latin American and Caribbean countries concerning privatization, retrofitting and restructuring of businesses and modernization of systems of production, innovation and technological development as strategic factors in competitiveness and industrial development, fostering of small and medium-sized enterprises in the context of modernization and competitiveness, and methodologies for evaluating the effectiveness of social expenditure.

28. UNDP has also provided funding for the Meeting of Experts on Prospects for External Financing for Latin America and the Caribbean, which was held on Margarita Island, Venezuela, on 11 and 12 March 1993, as one of a series of review and regional coordination meetings organized in the framework of project RLA/92/008. As an input to the meeting, a document entitled "New external financing systems for Latin America and the Caribbean" was prepared; the document was presented to the Joint Ministerial Committee of the Boards of Governors of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund on the Transfer of Real Resources to Developing Countries (Development Committee) at its meeting held on 1 May 1993.

29. UNDP also actively participated in the 20th ordinary meeting of the Latin American Council, held in Mexico City from 30 May to 3 June 1994.

30. The meeting of trade policy officials of States members of SELA will be held in Quito, Ecuador, on 19 and 20 September. This meeting will be financed in part with UNDP resources.

31. UNDP has also provided funds for the Ibero-American Business Forum on Prospects and Opportunities for Foreign Investment in Latin America, to be held in Madrid on 28 September 1994 within the framework of the annual meeting of IMF and the World Bank.

32. On that occasion, high-level representatives from the region will discuss a document entitled "50 años de Bretton Woods: reflexiones y propuestas para una mejor relación con América Latina y el Caribe", which was prepared with UNDP funds.

33. The Permanent Secretariat of SELA has prepared a document entitled "Hacia políticas sociales más eficientes: elaboración de un indicador para evaluar la eficiencia del gasto social en América Latina y el Caribe", as part of a project addressing the issue. UNDP also made a major contribution to the preparation of this document.

34. In addition, UNDP will finance the regional meeting of experts on the effectiveness of social expenditure, to be held at the headquarters of the Permanent Secretariat on 17 and 18 October 1994.

35. The UNDP Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC) and the UNDP Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean have continued to provide support for the conduct of meetings of directors of international technical cooperation, which are convened once a year by the Permanent Secretariat, with the aim of defining policies to strengthen the management capacity of national TCDC focal points, and of identifying and promoting activities, programmes and projects in priority areas defined by Governments.

36. The UNDP Special Unit for TCDC provided financial support for the conduct of the Meeting of Experts on Unfair Competition and Competition Policies, held in Mexico City in July 1993.

37. The 9th Meeting of Directors of International Technical Cooperation and the Meeting of the Coordination Mechanism for International Bodies and Regional Forums Engaged in TCDC Activities were held from 16 to 20 May 1994 in La Paz, Bolivia.

38. During the period under review, especially as the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations reached its final stages, collaboration between the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and SELA in the area of trade greatly intensified. During the latter part of 1993, a SELA official worked at the UNCTAD secretariat within the context of the project on international trade and trade relations for Latin America and the Caribbean (LATINTRADE project), designed, among other things, to support the Latin American countries in the final negotiating process.

39. During the period leading up to the formal conclusion of the Uruguay Round and the adoption of the Final Act, UNCTAD and SELA collaborated in the preparation of an evaluation of the results of the Round from the viewpoint of the Latin American countries. This evaluation was discussed at a workshop held in Caracas in March 1994 and was subsequently finalized and circulated to the Latin American countries before the ministerial meeting held at Marrakesh. During the meeting, the Officer-in-Charge of UNCTAD and the Permanent Secretary of SELA met with Latin American delegations to discuss a draft programme for joint technical assistance. The UNCTAD secretariat participated in the special session of the Latin American Council, which examined the results of the Uruguay Round.

40. UNCTAD and SELA are continuing their collaboration in the execution of the LATINTRADE project, whose objective is to enhance and strengthen the negotiating capacities of the Latin American and Caribbean countries in order to enable them to participate more effectively in trade agreements. The project, for which UNCTAD and SELA are jointly seeking additional funding to enable it to continue, will include post-Uruguay Round implementation issues, trade and environment, trade in services, regional trade information infrastructure and the development of human resources. UNCTAD and SELA have drawn up a programme of regional and national seminars which are currently in progress in, inter alia, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Mexico and Peru.

41. In the context of continued collaboration between UNCTAD and SELA in the area of trade and environment, a regional seminar on environmental policies and

market access for 27 Latin American and Caribbean countries was held in Colombia on 19 and 20 October 1993. The seminar, jointly organized by UNCTAD and SELA, with the cooperation of ECLAC, was hosted by the Government of Colombia and financed by UNDP (Special Unit for TCDC) and the LATINTRADE project. Experts from Colombia, Germany, Mexico, the Netherlands and the United States participated, as did experts from the following regional and international organizations: ECLAC, GATT, LAIA, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), SELA, UNCTAD and the World Bank. UNCTAD and SELA are jointly preparing a book for publication in July 1994 (in English and Spanish) on environmental policies and market access for Latin American countries.

42. On 21 October 1993, in conjunction with the regional seminar, the Government of Colombia hosted a workshop which it organized jointly with UNCTAD and with the cooperation of SELA. Some of the experts who were invited to the seminar also participated in the workshop, whose purpose was to examine studies on trade and environment linkages in Colombia undertaken in the context of the UNCTAD/UNDP project entitled "Reconciliation of environment and trade policies".

43. In connection with the follow-up to the Uruguay Round negotiations, UNCTAD, through its LATINTRADE project, and UNDP are planning to hold a workshop on trade and environment in the Americas in the latter part of 1994 in which ECLAC, SELA, other regional organizations, research centres and regional experts are invited to participate. Moreover, UNCTAD and SELA are planning to organize, also for the latter part of 1994, a regional seminar on trade and environment for Latin American and Caribbean countries.

44. On 30 November 1993, the UNCTAD secretariat signed a cooperation agreement with the Latin American Fisheries Development Organization (OLDEPESCA), which is an autonomous permanent organ of SELA.

45. In response to an invitation from the UNCTAD secretariat to attend a workshop on chartering, the SELA Permanent Secretariat indicated that, although the issue of transport had not been part of the SELA work programme for several years, it should be taken up again by the organization in order to stimulate cooperation initiatives between countries of the region.

46. The International Trade Centre UNCTAD/GATT (ITC) has been consistently maintaining contact with SELA in the field of international trade and related areas since its establishment in 1975.

47. ITC has provided technical assistance to the Latin American and Caribbean Trade Information and Foreign Trade Support Programme (PLACIEX) since 1987 through projects RLA/87/045 and RLA/47/44, financed respectively by UNDP and a trust fund contribution from the Government of the Netherlands. These projects, whose objective was the development of a trade information system of the Caribbean and Latin American countries, were sponsored by SELA in view of the important contribution that can be made by the dissemination of information to the expansion of intraregional trade.

48. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) participated in several meetings convened by SELA on issues relating to social funds, links between

social and economic policies, economic adjustment policies and the social situation.

49. The Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has not implemented any specific projects in cooperation with SELA during the period in question, but SELA has sent representatives to the ministerial meetings on the environment in Latin America and the Caribbean.

50. The United Nations University (UNU) does not engage in any direct cooperation with SELA but it works with scholars and institutions in several Latin American countries members of SELA and carries out some collaborative activities through their research and training centres, in the context of the World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU/WIDER) and the Institute for New Technologies (UNU/INTECH).

51. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) (UNCHS (Habitat)) is a substantive partner of SELA, particularly in the area of promoting adequate policies to strengthen the management of human settlements and to improve the general condition of human settlements in the Latin American region. UNCHS (Habitat) expressed its desire to establish closer cooperation with SELA in the future.

III. CONCLUSION

52. It is important to emphasize that cooperation between SELA and the programmes, organizations and agencies of the United Nations is growing and diversifying, and inter-agency cooperation has been established in many areas in which optimal use is being made of existing resources for the benefit of the countries of the region.